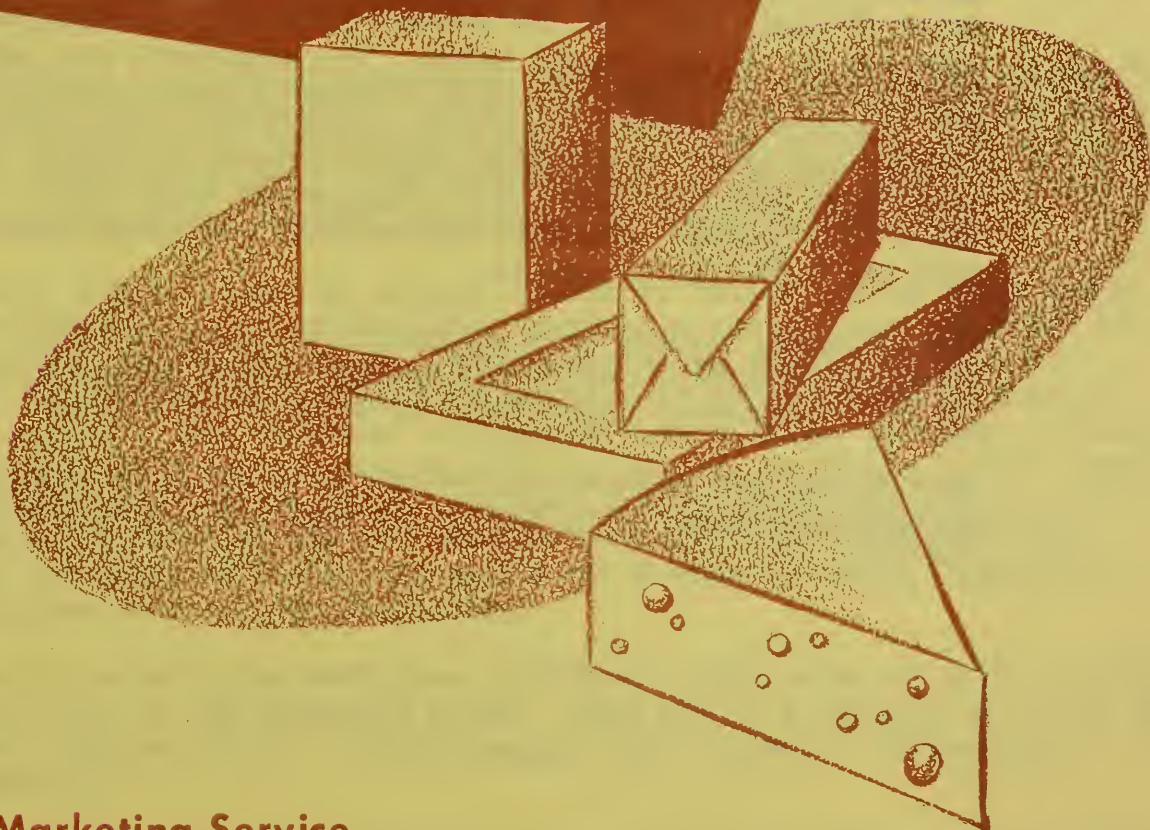


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Household Purchases of Butter, Cheese, Nonfat Dry Milk Solids, and Margarine, February 1955



HPD-5

April 1955

Agricultural Marketing Service

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

PREFACE

This report is one in a series of monthly reports first published for April 1954 showing estimates of current household purchases and related information for butter, cheese, nonfat dry milk solids, and margarine. This series is based on information obtained in a cooperative project financed by the United States Department of Agriculture and by the dairy industry through the American Dairy Association. The Department funds are provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (RMA Title II).

The basic data presented herein were collected and tabulated from the National Consumer Panel of the Market Research Corporation of America under contract with the Department. The data beginning April 1954 are based on reports from a sample of approximately 5,800 families. Additional data for butter and margarine were obtained from records of the contractor for the months April 1953 - March 1954. Prior to April 1954, the number of families in the sample used in making estimates was about 4,300.

In order to maintain comparability between the data obtained prior to April 1954 and the current data, the back data were adjusted to the new sample level. The adjustment was made by tabulating reports from both consumer samples--the old and the new--for a period of months to obtain the relationship between the level of purchases reported by each sample. The ratio thus obtained were used to adjust the April 1953-March 1954 monthly estimates to the level currently reported from the 5,800-family sample.

The estimates include only purchases for consumption by household consumers and do not reflect volume purchased by hotels, restaurants, hospitals, or other institutions.

This report was prepared in the Market Development Branch, Marketing Research Division, of the Agricultural Marketing Service.

HOUSEHOLD PURCHASES OF BUTTER, CHEESE, NONFAT DRY
MILK SOLIDS, AND MARGARINE, FEBRUARY 1955

The data in this report are estimates of total purchases by household consumers only, and do not include consumption in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, or other institutional outlets. Data for a month are for a 4-week period (28 days) in order to permit comparisons of purchase volume between periods of equal length.

SUMMARY

United States householders reported that they bought nearly 20 percent more butter and nearly 10 percent more margarine in February 1955 than in February 1954. Household purchases of butter were larger each month during April 1954-February 1955 than in the corresponding months a year earlier. Margarine purchases for household use were reported larger than in the same month a year earlier during October 1954-February 1955, but were slightly smaller during April-September 1954 than in the same period of 1953. The reported gains in household purchases of butter and margarine over the same months a year earlier were particularly large since October, reflecting mainly purchases by additional families.

The comparisons in household purchases of butter and margarine during 1953-1954 and 1954-1955 are based on samples of representative households which indicate, within reasonable limits, changes in purchase volumes from a year ago and from month to month. The data do not include estimates of purchases for use in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, or other institutions.

Householders bought almost 64 million pounds of butter during the 4 weeks of February 1955, a gain of more than 10 million pounds over purchases in February 1954. Butter purchases for household use during the 11-month period April 1954-February 1955 were reported 13 percent greater than in the same period a year earlier. A Department preliminary estimate of total domestic civilian disappearance of creamery butter, excluding butter donated under domestic food distribution programs, during April 1954-February 1955 indicates an increase of about 7 percent over April 1953-February 1954. Household purchases of butter are estimated to make up over 60 percent of total disappearance of creamery butter.

Purchases of butter by householders in February 1955 were 1.5 million pounds below the level of the preceding month. This may be a seasonal movement as there was a drop of about 3 million pounds from January to February in 1954 (table 1).

The average price paid for butter by consumers in this survey during February 1955 was just under 68 cents a pound, somewhat less than in the several preceding months, but slightly higher than prices last spring and summer. Compared to a year earlier, however, household consumer prices for butter were 10 percent lower.

Over 45 percent of all families reported purchases of butter during the 4-week period of February 1955, 3 percentage points above the same month in 1954 but about the same as in the preceding month. The percentage of all families buying butter was reported above a year earlier during the October 1954-February 1955 months, indicating that additional families entered the butter market in this most recent period.

Margarine purchases for household use during February 1955 were reported at over 103 million pounds, up 9 million pounds from February 1954. For the April 1954-February 1955 period, margarine purchases by United States householders were reported 3 percent larger than in the corresponding period a year earlier. The Department preliminary estimate of total domestic civilian disappearance of margarine in all outlets, household and nonhousehold, during the 11-month period ending February 1955, was reported 4 percent above April 1953-February 1954. Household purchases of margarine are estimated to be about 90 percent of total domestic civilian use.

United States householders reported buying about the same total quantity of margarine in February as in 4 weeks of the preceding month, as was also the case in January and February of 1954 when the purchase level was about the same in both months (table 2).

The average of prices paid for margarine by householders in this survey was 25.7 cents per pound in February 1955, about the same as a year earlier and unchanged from average prices in November, December, and January.

About 63 percent of all families reported margarine purchases in February 1955, compared with 61 percent in February 1954. As was reported for butter, the percentage of all families buying margarine was higher each month during the October 1954-February 1955 period than in the same month a year earlier, indicating that there was some strengthening in the consumer market for margarine.

Twenty percent of all families reported buying both butter and margarine in February 1955, while 11 percent bought neither. The reported percentage buying both has tended upward since last April while the percentage buying neither has shown a downward movement over the April 1954-February 1955 period.

Information on household purchases of cheese and nonfat dry milk solids prior to April 1954 is not available.

Householders bought an estimated total of 56 million pounds of natural and processed cheese (purchased weight basis) in February 1955. This total for February 1955 was 2 million pounds above purchases in a 4-week period of the preceding month and was the highest monthly level reported thus far in this survey.

Natural cheese purchases by householders during February 1955 were reported at 29.6 million pounds, compared with 29.1 million pounds a month earlier. Consumers reported buying more natural American and "other" varieties than in January 1955, but smaller quantities of Swiss and cream cheese (table 4).

Total processed cheese purchases for household use in February 1955 were reported at 26.3 million pounds, compared with 24.9 million pounds in January. For the second consecutive month, consumers reported larger purchases during February of all types--processed cheese, spreads, and foods--than a month earlier. Compared to earlier months in this survey, the level of cheese spread purchases during January and February 1955 reflected a gain in relation to total purchases of all processed types (table 5).

Prices for the natural cheese types, other than American, were reported somewhat higher in February 1955 than in the preceding month. Natural American makes up about 60 percent of total natural cheese purchases. Consumers reported paying about the same price for processed cheese in February, but somewhat lower prices for cheese foods and cheese spreads than a month earlier.

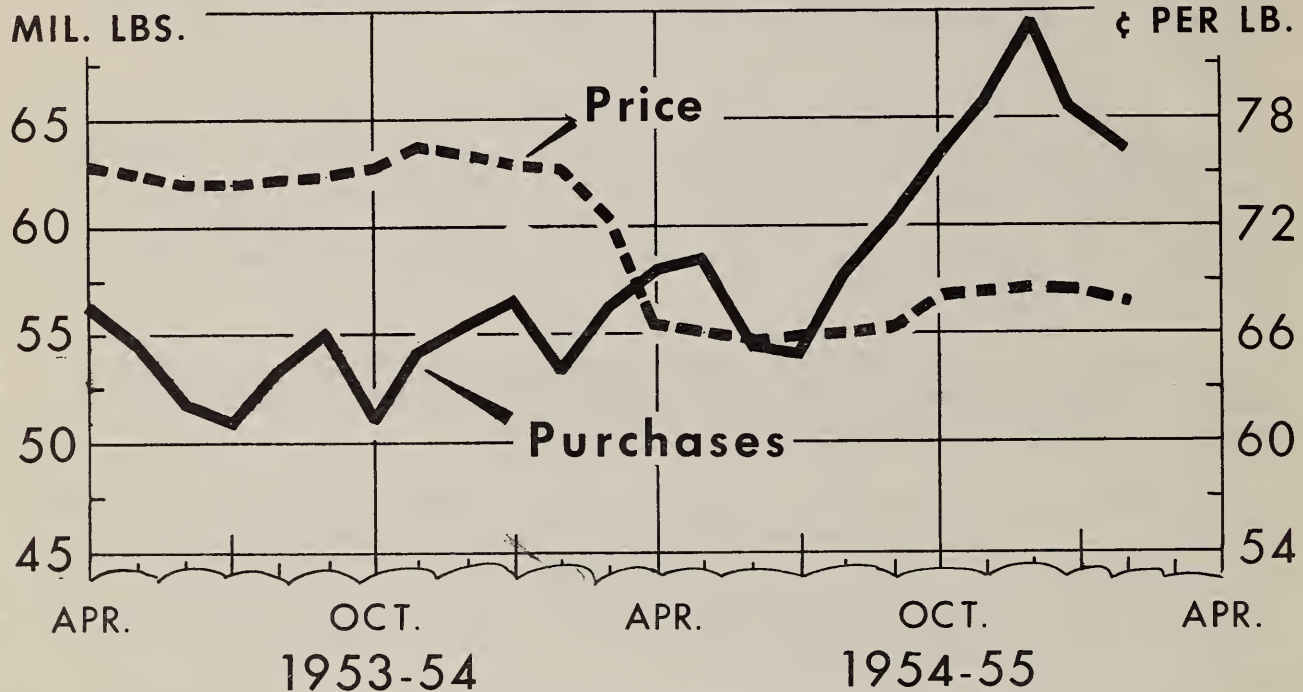
The percentage of all families making purchases of natural or processed cheese was 62.5 percent in February 1955, the highest percentage figure reported in the April 1954-February 1955 period.

Cottage cheese purchases, not included in the above cheese totals, gained sharply in February for the second consecutive month and were reported at 38.2 million pounds. The reported February level of cottage cheese purchases was the highest for any month covered thus far in this survey. Prices paid for cottage cheese continued relatively unchanged over the 11 months since April 1954 (table 6).

Nonfat dry milk solids purchases for household use in February 1955 were reported at 13.5 million pounds, up 1.1 million pounds from a month earlier and at the highest level reported to date for any month since the survey began, in April 1954. The average size of purchase of nonfat dry milk solids was about the same in February as in January but well below that reported last spring and summer. The increase in volume of purchases reported during January and February is associated with an increase in numbers of families buying nonfat dry milk solids, but these comparisons of percentages of families buying are available only in the quarterly reports in this series.

The average of prices paid for nonfat dry milk solids by householders was 40.3 cents per pound in February, practically unchanged from a month earlier. The February price reflects a halt in monthly increases in prices to consumers for nonfat dry milk solids which started last September (table 7).

HOUSEHOLD PURCHASES AND PRICES OF BUTTER



SOURCE: NATIONAL CONSUMER PANEL OF MRCA

4-WEEK PERIODS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

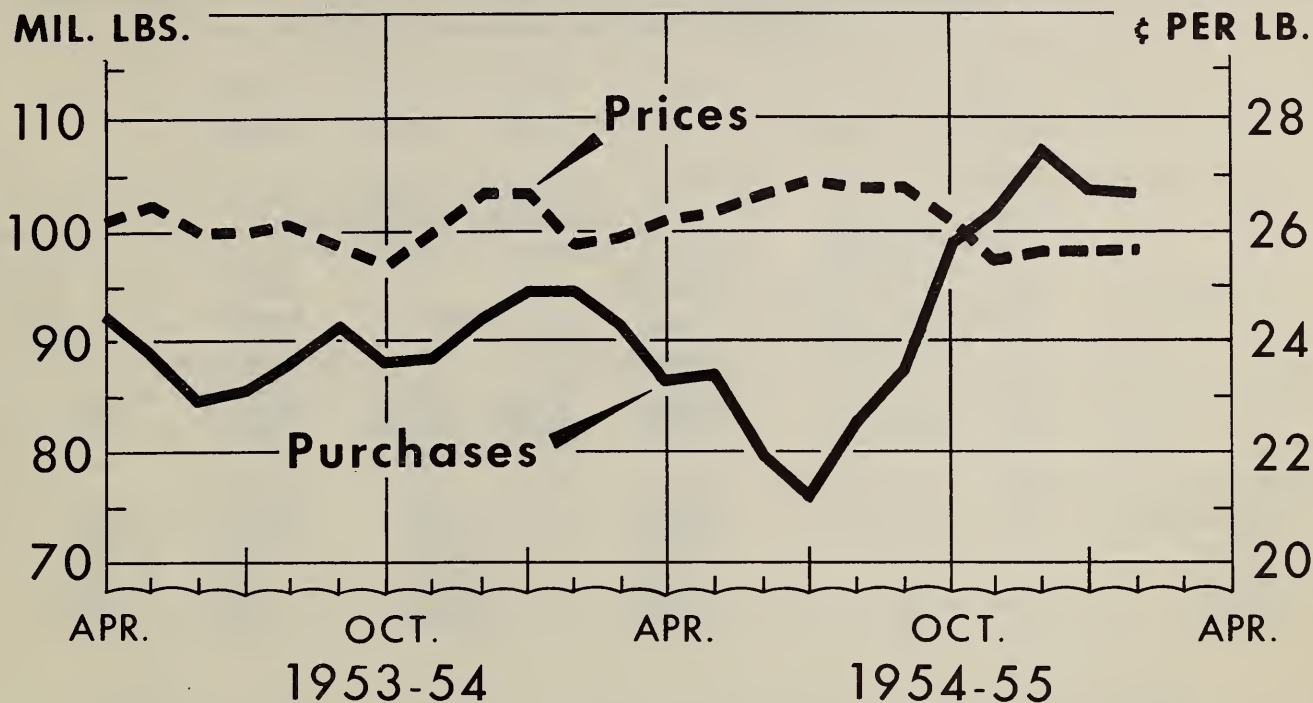
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AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Table 1.--Butter: Household purchases and average price per pound,
U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased				Average price paid		Percentage of all families buying		Per buying family			
	Total		Per 1,000 population		per pound				Purchases		Quantity per purchase	
	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54
	Million pounds	Million pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Cents	Cents	Percent	Percent	Number	Number	Pounds	Pounds
April-----	58.0	56.2	367	369	66.6	75.4	44.0	44.7	2.74	2.71	1.09	1.06
May-----	58.5	54.7	371	359	66.0	75.0	42.8	43.5	2.80	2.75	1.10	1.04
June-----	54.5	51.9	345	340	65.7	74.5	41.4	42.7	2.72	2.64	1.09	1.04
July-----	54.2	50.9	341	332	65.8	74.5	42.2	43.3	2.65	2.58	1.09	1.04
August-----	57.9	53.3	364	348	66.0	74.7	43.3	44.2	2.81	2.67	1.08	1.03
September-----	60.4	55.1	379	360	66.4	74.9	43.1	45.9	2.86	2.69	1.09	1.03
October-----	63.2	51.0	394	331	68.1	75.3	45.4	43.7	2.84	2.59	1.09	1.02
November-----	65.7	54.4	410	353	68.2	76.6	46.2	44.8	2.88	2.65	1.09	1.04
December-----	69.2	55.5	432	361	68.6	76.0	48.5	44.4	2.66	2.68	1.11	1.05
January-----	65.3	56.6	407	367	68.2	75.6	45.5	42.8	2.73	2.90	1.09	1.04
February-----	63.8	53.4	398	346	67.7	75.2	45.6	42.2	2.65	2.73	1.10	1.04
March-----		56.3		365		72.2		44.1		2.75		1.04

HOUSEHOLD PURCHASES AND PRICES OF MARGARINE



SOURCE: NATIONAL CONSUMER PANEL OF MRCA

4-WEEK PERIODS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NEG. 1104-55(4) - AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Table 2.--Margarine: Household purchases and average price per pound, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased				Average price paid per pound		Percentage of all families buying		Per buying family			
	Total		Per 1,000 population						Purchases		Quantity per purchase	
	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54	1954-55	1953-54
	Million pounds	Million pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Cents	Cents	Percent	Percent	Number	Number	Pounds	Pounds
April-----	86.3	92.1	546	605	26.2	26.2	56.4	58.6	2.38	2.47	1.45	1.43
May-----	87.1	89.1	551	584	26.4	26.5	56.4	57.7	2.39	2.45	1.44	1.42
June-----	79.9	84.5	506	554	26.7	26.0	54.7	56.9	2.25	2.35	1.45	1.43
July-----	76.2	85.5	479	558	26.9	26.0	53.5	57.7	2.23	2.31	1.43	1.46
August-----	82.7	88.0	520	574	26.8	26.1	55.7	58.7	2.31	2.36	1.44	1.45
September-----	87.8	91.1	552	595	26.8	25.8	58.0	59.9	2.36	2.40	1.43	1.43
October-----	98.7	88.2	616	573	26.2	25.4	62.4	58.9	2.39	2.24	1.46	1.49
November-----	101.8	88.5	635	575	25.5	26.0	63.4	60.0	2.41	2.24	1.48	1.46
December-----	107.4	91.8	670	597	25.7	26.7	63.7	60.0	2.29	2.37	1.53	1.47
January-----	103.9	94.6	648	614	25.7	26.7	63.2	58.7	2.29	2.46	1.48	1.46
February-----	103.4	94.7	645	600	25.7	25.8	63.3	60.7	2.25	2.37	1.51	1.45
March-----		91.7		581		25.9		59.8		2.37		1.43

National Consumer Panel of Market Research Corporation of America.

Table 4.--Natural Cheese: Household purchases and average price,
U. S., 4-week periods

Year and month	Purchases				Average price paid			
	American	Swiss	Cream	Other	Per pound		Per 3 oz.	
					American	Swiss	Other	Cream
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
1954-55								
April-----	14,910	3,180	3,390	3,320	63.6	78.0	75.5	14.1
May-----	15,310	2,950	3,460	3,590	63.0	76.8	77.4	14.3
June-----	13,910	3,580	2,880	2,860	62.3	75.4	74.4	14.3
July-----	14,160	3,120	2,500	2,950	63.0	75.0	74.0	14.4
August-----	15,010	2,940	2,310	2,940	62.9	75.1	76.1	14.4
September---	16,140	3,520	2,790	2,950	62.0	74.2	77.2	14.2
October-----	17,280	3,640	3,370	3,520	62.0	72.7	77.4	13.7
November-----	16,950	3,100	3,670	3,560	62.8	74.9	74.7	13.5
December-----	16,800	3,290	4,090	4,070	63.0	75.1	81.9	13.9
January-----	17,270	3,670	4,210	3,920	63.3	72.0	75.8	13.7
February-----	17,920	3,530	3,950	4,240	62.8	72.5	78.8	14.2
March-----								

Table 5.--Processed Cheese: Household purchases and average price,
U. S., 4-week periods

Year and month	Purchases			Average price paid per pound		
	Processed cheese	Cheese foods	Cheese spreads	Processed cheese	Cheese foods	Cheese spreads
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	Cents	Cents	Cents
1954-55						
April-----	10,740	9,110	5,670	60.9	47.1	57.9
May-----	10,670	9,020	6,290	60.6	45.8	52.0
June-----	10,330	9,420	5,450	61.2	45.8	54.3
July-----	9,900	7,960	5,170	61.5	46.7	53.9
August-----	9,940	7,580	5,710	61.2	46.6	51.9
September---	10,460	8,090	6,000	60.1	45.5	51.9
October-----	10,000	8,160	6,790	61.2	44.8	52.1
November-----	9,660	6,360	6,050	61.1	44.5	53.7
December-----	9,210	6,210	6,130	62.0	46.1	55.6
January-----	10,020	6,970	7,920	61.4	44.9	51.8
February-----	10,700	7,250	8,350	61.4	44.2	49.8
March-----						

Source: National Consumer Panel of Market Research Corporation of America.

Table 6.--Cottage Cheese: Household purchases and average price,
U. S., 4-week periods

Year and month	Purchases	Average price paid	
		Per 12 oz. unit for all purchases	Per actual 12 oz. unit purchases
	1,000 pounds	Cents	Cents
1954-55			
April-----	37,370	21.2	22.7
May-----	36,020	21.2	22.5
June-----	35,600	21.0	22.7
July-----	34,300	20.9	22.7
August-----	32,820	21.2	23.0
September---	31,720	21.1	22.8
October-----	32,780	21.3	23.0
November----	32,940	21.4	23.1
December----	30,110	21.2	23.1
January-----	34,990	21.2	23.2
February-----	38,200	21.3	23.2
March-----			

Table 7.--Nonfat dry milk solids: Household purchases and average
price per pound, U. S., 4-week periods

Year and month	Quantity purchased		Average price paid		
	Average per purchase	Total	Per 1,000 population	Per pound for all purchases	Per actual 1-pound unit purchases
	Ounces	1,000 pounds	Pounds	Cents	Cents
1954-55					
April-----	21.1	11,080	70.2	38.1	36.7
May-----	21.1	10,880	68.9	37.8	36.1
June-----	22.6	9,560	60.5	37.3	35.4
July-----	23.5	9,560	60.1	36.4	34.8
August-----	22.6	9,410	59.1	35.5	33.7
September---	22.0	9,910	62.3	36.7	34.1
October-----	20.6	10,860	67.7	38.3	35.0
November----	20.3	10,660	66.5	38.5	35.9
December----	19.9	10,110	63.1	39.7	35.6
January-----	18.9	12,360	77.1	40.5	36.1
February-----	18.8	13,510	84.2	40.3	35.8
March-----					

Source: National Consumer Panel of Market Research Corporation of America.

